



NEWS RELEASE

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Duarte Man Convicted of Murder, Attempted Murder, Assault for Backyard Attack

A jury convicted a 42-year-old man today of killing his neighbor, shooting another and pointing a gun at several other individuals before fleeing from deputies, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

The jury deliberated for about a day before finding Luis Santillan Valdes of Duarte guilty of seven felony counts in case GA099511: one count each of first-degree murder, attempted murder and fleeing a pursuing peace officer's motor vehicle while driving and four counts of assault with a firearm.

Jurors also found true special allegations that the defendant personally and intentionally discharged a firearm, which caused great bodily injury and death during the crime.

Valdes is scheduled to be sentenced April 6 in Department T of the Los Angeles County Superior Court, Alhambra Branch. The defendant faces a maximum possible punishment of 77 years to life in prison for the murder and attempted murder, plus an additional 27 years and eight months for the assaults and fleeing police.

Deputy District Attorney Vanessa Alfaro, who prosecuted the case, said on the evening of Aug. 19, 2016, victim Gabriel De La Torre invited his neighbor, Luis Santillan Valdes, and several others to drink alcohol in his backyard.

While drinking, Valdes was offended by a remark and became angry that the group was laughing at him, the prosecutor said. The defendant left, but returned with a gun and fatally shot De La Torre, 32. Valdes then pointed his gun at two other men, shooting at one of them, according to the prosecutor. As the defendant walked to the front of the house, he pointed his firearm at three other people, according to the prosecutor.

Following the incident, De La Torre's family called 911 for help and Valdes fled the scene. When authorities arrived, they were briefed about the attack and given a description of the defendant's car, the prosecutor added.

Law enforcement located Valdes as he was driving, but he refused to pull over his car, the prosecutor said. The defendant eventually stopped his vehicle on the 210 Freeway off-ramp in Azusa and was taken into custody.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.